

Indy Rezone story

Indy Rezone is a multi-year effort that started with a comprehensive review of the zoning ordinances that regulate land use and development in Indianapolis. This review was followed by a revision of the ordinances to better reflect the conditions and development climate of the 21st century. The last comprehensive update of the zoning ordinance was completed with the adoption of Unigov in 1970.

The starting point for the Indy Rezone effort was a \$1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This 3-year Community Challenge Planning Grant allowed the City to assign 2.5 staff persons to the effort and to secure consultants to help with public outreach, technical research and ordinance writing expertise.

The public outreach effort included the creation of a website that allowed the general public to see background information about zoning, view podcasts that helped explain some of the zoning issues, and presented a draft of the ordinance for review and comment. The website experienced over 6,000 hits and the public submitted 115 review comments.

In addition to the website, staff participated in nearly 200 meetings or presentations with approximately 3,500 participants to aid in the writing of the ordinance. These include 25 meetings of the Steering Committee to guide policy decisions and 31 meetings of five technical task forces that shaped the details of the content.

Once the public draft was completed, staff engaged in detailed discussions with residential builders, commercial developers, neighborhood groups, and urban agricultural groups to refine the content. The end result is an ordinance that has been widely vetted.

Summary of the some of the major changes in Indy Rezone:

Completely Different Format

- The 14 different ordinances that currently govern zoning were consolidated into a single ordinance with 5 chapters.
- All the definitions and calculations are in a single location and apply to the entire ordinance.
- The revised ordinance includes greater use of tables and illustrations that make the content easier to understand.

Use Table

- The public or developers can go to a single table to identify all of the permitted uses in each of the primary zoning districts.
- The public or developers can go to a single table to identify what zoning is required for a particular land use.
- Reduced the number of different land uses from 578 in the ordinances that currently govern zoning to approximately 150 uses in the new ordinance.

Primary Zoning Districts

- Created a new category of zoning: mixed use districts. These will allow for more than one type of land use in areas outside of downtown and give the City better options to encourage transit oriented development.
- Reduced the number of commercial zoning districts to help make each commercial district more distinctive.
- Reduced the industrial zoning districts to eliminate confusion.

Created Context Sensitive Zoning

- Designate the entire county into one of two different context areas: Compact Context Area or Metro Context Area.
- Some of the development regulations are different depending on whether a site is located in a Compact Context Area or a Metro Context Area.
- Will result in new construction that better matches development that is already in place.

Key Changes in the Development Regulations

- Changes that Address Environmental Quality
- New stream corridor protection setbacks
- Additional wellfield protection requirements
- Green factor scoring for landscaping on commercial, industrial, and multi-family sites
- More landscaping required for commercial and industrial parking lots
- New incentives for tree preservation
- Increased requirement for trees along street frontage

Changes that Affect Residential Areas

- More open space required in residential subdivisions
- Access and connectivity requirements for subdivisions
- Simplified the requirement for livability space in multi-family developments
- Allow accessory dwelling units on lots with single-family detached homes
- Ordinance identifies a greater number of housing types
- Increased maximum building heights in some multi-family districts
- Change in how the size of residential accessory structures are regulated

Changes that Improve Redevelopment and Reinvestment Opportunities

- New Industrial and commercial development required to meet subdivision standards
- Provision that allows greater number of uses in a vacant building
- Changes in the required on-site parking: reduced some minimums and added some maximum limits

Other Major Changes

- Limitations on parking in front of industrial and commercial buildings in the Compact Context Area
- More options for urban agriculture: Garden as a primary use, beekeeping as a hobby, and personal livestock
- Eliminate auto fueling stations (i.e. gas stations) as a permitted use in C-3 districts